STANDING COMMITTEE

ON

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ANNUAL REPORT

November 2001

Legislative Committees Office
House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

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102-03417/

Hon. Murray Scott
Speaker
House of Assembly
Province House
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Development, I am pleased to submit the 2000 / 2001 Report of the Committee for the Second Session of the Fifty-Eighth General Assembly.

Respectively submitted,

Brooke Taylor

Brooke Taylor, MLA
(Colchester - Musquodoboit Valley)
Chairman
Standing Committee on Economic Development

Halifax, Nova Scotia
2001

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword 4

Georgia - Pacific Canada Inc.
Background 5
Matters of Discussion 6

Mac Tara Limited
Background 7
Matters of Discussion 8

LaFarge Canada Inc.
Background 9
Matters of Discussion 10

Atlantic Provinces Ready-Mixed Concrete Association
Background 12
Matters of Discussion 13

Maritime Lumber Bureau
Background 14
Matters of Discussion 14

Southwest Fishermen's Rights Association
Background 16
Matters of Discussion 17

Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Background 18
Matters of Discussion 20

Britech Information Systems
Background 21
Matters of Discussion 23

Information Technology Industry Alliance of Nova Scotia
Background 24
Matters of Discussion 26

Communities in Bloom
Background 27
Matters of Discussion 29

B.C.A. Holdings Ltd.
Background 30
Matters of Discussion 31

Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Background 34
Matters of Discussion 34

Statement of Submission 37

Committee Membership / Meetings 38

Notices / Transcripts / Reports 39

Acknowledgements 39

Foreword

The report of the Standing Committee on Economic Development was written according to the mandate of the committee categorizing specific topics of interest under the Departments and Ministers to which the Standing Committee can consider.

The report is written under individualized headings outlining the concerns and issues brought forth from each group /organization.

Several topics listed were of great interest to the Standing Committee and / or were brought forward as a request to the Committee which do not specifically fall under its mandate.

Mandate

For greater certainty, the Economic Development Committee is established for the purpose of considering matters normally assigned to or within the purview of the Department of Economic Development and the Minister responsible for the Department and the Department and Minister of Transportation and Public Works and matters relating to the Technology and Science Secretariat. (1987 R. 60(2); am. 1993; am. 1996)

Georgia-Pacific Canada, Inc.

Witnesses

Georgia-Pacific Corporation
Mr. Thomas Howard - Northeast Regional Manager, Government Affairs

Georgia-Pacific Canada, Inc.
Mr. Robert Fraser - Plant Manager, Sugar Camp Quarry
Mr. James Graham - Melford Manager

Background

The presentation opened with the introduction of Georgia - Pacific's Sugar Camp mine site. This site has about four years of reserves remaining which is now being phase it out while phasing in the new deposit at Melford. In 1997 GP initiated environmental assessments on their Melford site. This process took about two years before they received a conditional permit. They began, at that time, to construct an interchange from the Trans Canada Highway into the Melford deposit and had hoped to have it completed by the fall of 2000.

Georgia-Pacific has been in Nova Scotia for 40 years with the development of the Melford project and is looking at another 30 years of doing business in Nova Scotia. The local economy around Sugar Camp, at that time, was about $16.5 million this consists of payroll, taxes, and other revenues.

Georgia-Pacific's environmental record has been stellar. Their first deposit opened at Big Brook in River Denys has been nominated for the President's Award for Excellence for the reclamation work that was done on it. Their safety record is also commendable, recognizing employees for completing 500,000 hours with an injury.

The company has more than 30 processing plants across North America, but only two production facilities, one on the Baja Peninsula in Mexico and the other in Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia. Manufacturing facilities are located in Ontario, Quebec, B.C. Edmonton and Winnipeg. They also have a paper mill in Thorold and are in the process of acquiring the assets of the Fort James Corporation which manufactures paper products.

Matters of Discussion

There were a number of matters discussed throughout the meeting. Outlined below are the topics that were dealt with during the meeting.

- Discussion on Georgia-Pacific's environmental assessment permits for the Melford location and issues surrounding their Memorandum of Agreement with First Nations groups. They had committed that 25 percent of the mine force at Melford will be first nation peoples.

- Issues surrounding Georgia-Pacific's application for mine abandonment and Mine Site Reclamation.

- Discussions on Wallboard Plant production in Nova Scotia, and the viability of marketing the product here compared to shipping it out-of-province. Another issue with producing wallboard is that it has to be produced relatively close to the marketplace because of the low margins and the difficulty transporting the product any great distance.

- Transportation costs and the pros and cons of highways versus railways.

- Discussion of the $.12 cent gypsum tax placed on the raw material and not on the processing side.

- Levels of employment and the impact on the local economy.

Documentation Requested

There was no documentation requested during this meeting.

A copy of the transcript of this meeting is available from the Legislative Committees Office. The transcript of this meeting can also be found online at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legi/hansard/comm/ed/ed001026.htm

MacTara Limited

Witnesses

MacTara Limited
Mr. Allan Reese - Vice President
Mr. John MacLellan - Timber Manager

Background

MacTara is the largest sawmill operation in Nova Scotia and the single largest mill site operating in the Atlantic Provinces. The company directly employs 340 persons, and 210 indirectly through contract operations. They are the largest employer in Central Nova Scotia. The payroll for the last fiscal year was in the area of $15 million. The average wage is in the range of $15 to $16 per hour. MacTara is also an ISO 9002 certified facility.

MacTara produces one and two-inch dimension lumber for the North American Market. Softwood and hardwood pulp are also produced for other companies such as the hardboard plant in Chester. They have a chipping facility in Sheet Harbour that produces for Mitsubishi, and produce softwood chips for both Kimberly-Clark and Stora Enso mills. They also produce pelletized bark fuel of which approximately 60,000 tons are produced and exported to the European market.

In addition, MacTara purchases both saw logs and cut-to-length as well as tree-length form. They also buy and harvest stud logs. Production is in excess of 180 million board feet per year with approximately $1.2 million spent on reforestation and thinning. The company regulates both the harvesting and transportation of forest products through their own standards called their ERA program (Effective, Responsible and Accountable). This program regulates how a product is loaded, secured and what condition the equipment is in.

MacTara provides an important market for forest products in Nova Scotia, spending $48 million on wood acquisitions per year. They are an active steward of the forest with both private and public stewardship programs now entering its fourth year.

MacTara also supports community projects through scholarships, and they also sponsored a community playground project in Upper Musquodoboit and a high-tech classroom at Musquodoboit Rural High School.

Matters of Discussion

There were a number of matters discussed throughout the meeting. Outlined below are the topics that were dealt with during the meeting.

- The downturn in the lumber industry and its effect on MacTara.
- MacTara's partnerships in the Private Lands Program, Stewardship Agreements, Silviculture, and Sustainable Forestry Funds programs.
- Discussions regarding MacTara's Occupational Health and Safety commitments and initiation of their own Safety Committee.
- Products provided to U.S. Market and other countries, and the possible expansion of their wood pellet industry.
- The utilization and harvesting of old forest growth.
- Stumpage rates and the whole process of consensus and input.

Documentation Requested

During the meeting the Committee had asked of the witnesses to provide information on the following:

MacTara's WCB assessment rates on premiums regarding accident rates; and information from MacTara's Safety committee regarding specific aspects of Health and Safety that could be studied and streamlined.

A copy of the transcript of this meeting is available from the Legislative Committees Office. The transcript of this meeting can also be found online at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legi/hansard/comm/ed/ed001205.htm

LaFarge Canada Inc.

Witnesses

LaFarge Canada Inc.
Mr. Jim Cross - Plant Manager
Mr. Ted Hounslow - Sales Representative

Cement Association of Canada
Mr. Bill Dooley - Vice President - Atlantic Region

Background

LaFarge is a world leader in construction materials. They are active in more than 70 countries, employing more than 71,000 persons' would-wide. LaFarge occupies leading positions in its product lines. However, with a pending takeover of the sixth largest cement producer in the world, LaFarge will become the largest producer in the world. The company is also an ISO 9002 certified and API certified (American Petroleum Institute) this means they are able to sell oil-well cement to the oil-well industry.

Labour, fuel and power represent about 70 per cent of their costs. They have 56 permanent unionized employees ,belonging to the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, and 24 permanent staff employees, and they also hire periodically, temporary employees to supplement. They have a good safety record and are committed to continuing training to stay abreast of high technology in the industry.

LaFarge has seven cement plants from coast to coast. They are the largest cement producer in Canada operating the only cement plant in Atlantic Canada. They have a few terminals in New Brunswick and one in Newfoundland. As a cement marketer there are three things to consider, first ICF housing (Insulated Concrete Forming Systems). This is a new form of construction that provides for energy savings, comforts, and other benefits, second, the acceptance of cement-based paving solutions for roads, intersection, mainline highway paving, and third infrastructures, to maintain the infrastructure to be safe and competitive.

LaFarge is situated on about 1,400 hectares of property located in Brookfield because of the source of limestone that they quarry at the plant. It is a very capital-intense, complex business. Originally built in 1965 the capacity was approximately 200,000 tons. Expanded in 1978 the capacity increased to approximately 450,000 tons. However, over the years the market has declined causing LaFarge to operate below full capacity.

The markets in Atlantic Canada are somewhat stable. However, there is some decline. Over the last three years, beginning in 1999, they had a total market of 507,000 tons. In 2000, the market declined to 495,000, presently, 2001 shows a decline in the market again down to about 443, 000 total market.

LaFarge produces a number of products to be responsive to the market. They produce oil-well cement for the offshore market making them the only producer of this product in the area. Although they have worked on such projects, notably the Confederation Bridge, the gas and oil industry, the Irving refinery, and the Halifax Casino; their main type of work is general construction, housing, commercial, institutional, and industrial-type construction.

The Brookfield Cement Plant has been a major economic contributor to the province for more than 35 years. The increasing costs of fuel have a major impact on the plant's manufacturing costs and the competitive position of the plant. The Atlantic market for cement is currently in decline. The plant operates below capacity. The Brookfield plant and the ready mix industry believe and would like to be part of the solution to improved infrastructure, concrete roads and houses. They can assist with the processing of waste fuels, uses of CKD and other remedial solutions.

Matters of Discussion

There were a number of matters discussed throughout the meeting. Outlined below are the topics that were dealt with during the meeting.

- Fuel, the cost comparison of coal vs. natural gas and the utilization of waste oil.
- The incineration of tires as an alternative fuel source and its usage in cement. Discussion also centered around the fact that it is not permissible to incinerate tires in Nova Scotia as per regulations. However, it is an acceptable practice in other provinces.
- Environmental aspects pertaining to air quality control, water and soil samples and blasting methods.

Documentation Requested

The following information was provided to the Standing Committee as requested:

To supply the information to the Standing Committee regarding the Resource Recovery Fund Board and LaFarge exploring the possibility to deal with the incineration of tires.

To request of the Department of Environment to review provincial regulations banning the incineration of tires within this province and to provide the Standing Committee information and an explanation for the development of this policy.

To obtain information concerning the cause of pipe and manhold deterioration - attack by H2S or biogenic corrosion, the installation of durable sewer systems and the repair and rehabilitation of existing systems.

A copy of the transcript of this meeting is available from the Legislative Committees Office. The transcript of this meeting can also be found online at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legi/hansard/comm/ed/ed010130.htm

Atlantic Provinces Ready-Mixed Concrete Association

Witnesses

Atlantic Provinces Ready-Mixed Concrete Association
Mr. John Connely - Marketing Director

Atlantic Cement Association of Canada
Mr. Bill Dooley - Vice President, Atlantic Region

Background

The Ready Mixed Association, formed under the Societies Act of Nova Scotia in 1967, is the voice of the ready mixed concrete industry. They are a non-profit, member-funded industry organization serving Atlantic Canada. APRMCA promotes the producers and associate members' interests, products and services. They also put on educational programs for and about their industry not only for their members, but also for the wider construction industry and for different government agencies and departments. The industry promotes new and innovative practical uses of concrete, environmental awareness, high standards of service, safety and quality.

One of the main cornerstones of the association is its plant's certification program. Put in place in 1982 it is the standard for source quality control. It is now carried in the standards specifications of the Department of Transportation and Public Works and it recognizes the CSA requirements and other standards in North America's concrete industry. As stated, "all producers who are members must be certified".

The association affiliates itself with numerous other industry organizations. They also have 57 producer members who operate 126 plants in 95 different communities throughout Atlantic Canada. Each of these plants are the engines of economic activity in every locality and they all have a significant contribution to make to the construction industry locally.

APRMCA also has 64 associate members who are mostly locally-owned business and some that are large international companies. The industry employs about 1,100 people producing an annual payroll of about $37 million.

In Nova Scotia there are 16 producer members who operate 40 plants in 32 different communities employing more than 400 direct employees producing an annual payroll of $13 million. The Ready Mixed Association represents 84 per cent of the companies, but 93 per cent of the plants that produce concrete. Compared to the total in Atlantic Canada, 74 companies operate 144 plants, 77 percent and 87 per cent respectively.

Comparing Atlantic Canada and Nova Scotia, the annual volume of ready-mixed concrete that is produced here is between one and 1.3 million cubic meters. Nova Scotia produces about 0.5 to 0.6 million cubic meters of that amount. The annual value of those shipments in Atlantic Canada is $117 million compared to $47.5 million in Nova Scotia. Comparing annual payrolls, Atlantic Canada averages 1.93 million person hours versus 0.68 million in Nova Scotia. The asset value in Nova Scotia is about $130 million. Interestingly Nova Scotia's market is about half the Atlantic market. APRMCA members are producing greater than 95 per cent of that volume.

Matters of Discussion

There were a number of matters discussed throughout the meeting. Outlined below are the topics that were dealt with during the meeting:

- Lifespan of concrete vs. asphalt highways, and the cost factors involved.
- Technologies and innovations of new materials, i.e., composite solutions, and carbon fibre reinforcements.
- The usages and comparison of Tilt up Construction and Pre cast construction. well.
- Offshore oil-well cement provisions to the offshore industry.

Documentation Requested

There was no documentation requested by the Committee during this meeting.

A copy of the transcript of this meeting is available from the Legislative Committees Office. The transcript of this meeting can also be found online at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legi/hansard/comm/ed/ed010417.htm

Maritime Lumber Bureau

Witnesses

Maritime Lumber Bureau
Ms. Diana Blenkhorn - President & C.E.O.

Background

Founded in 1938, the Maritime Lumber Bureau has presented a unified position on behalf of the softwood lumber industry in Atlantic Canada.

In 1998 the MLB became ISO registered; and provides the provision of administration, inspection/grading and training services, certification programs and information dissemination, associated with the production of solid wood products and market access requirements.

In 1994 total Maritime production of 61 per cent came from the private landowners in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Maine. By 1999, 74.4 per cent of that growth (2.1 billion) was coming from private land in the region.

There are more than 72,000 private woodlot owners who contribute to their livelihood through good stewardship of their forest land. As a result, 74.4 per cent of Atlantic Canada's softwood lumber is derived from private sources both in Canada and the State of Maine. This compares to only 7 per cent of softwood lumber from all of Canada originating from private land. Despite the fact that Nova Scotia is responsible for only three per cent of United States consumption, Atlantic Canada is responsible for 80 per cent of private lumber production in Canada.

Matters of Discussion

There were a number of matters discussed throughout the meeting. Outlined below are the topics that were dealt with during the meeting:

- The threat of restriction to the United States market. This is the most critical issue that is facing the softwood lumber industry in Atlantic Canada presently.

- Atlantic Canada's countervailing duty; and the fact that 92 per cent of all the Atlantic Canadian shipments to the United States were excluded through company-specific exemptions; the balance of Canadian shipments of lumber to the United States had a 15 per cent countervailing duty penalty applied to it.

- The forestry policy and the allowance for reduction in stumpage prices within Nova Scotia. It was recommended, (by MLB to the industry) that a reduction in stumpage would not be wise given the exclusion.

- Implemented on April 1, 1996, MLB's Certificate of Origin Program was put into place to track every shipment of lumber originating in the four Atlantic Provinces.

- Concerns with overcutting depleting Nova Scotia's forestry at a greater rate than it is to regrow it emphasizes the need to have a system put in place so that the landowners can continue to replenish or provide good silviculture operations.

- Concerns regarding the brown spruce longhorn beetle causes interest because the United States can and will ban softwood lumber shipment from Nova Scotia unless they are treated. Eradication is the solution to the problem, not control.

- Clearcutting. Nova Scotia needs to have a productive and well-managed forest. Sustainability with a productive and well-managed forest with responsibility being shared by both the landowner and the industry.

Documentation Requested

It was requested to provide the Committee with information on the Maritime situation regarding the Softwood Lumber Industry.

A copy of the transcript of this meeting is available from the Legislative Committees Office. The transcript of this meeting can also be found online at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legi/hansard/comm/ed/ed010529.htm

Southwest Fishermen's Rights Association

Witnesses

Southwest Fishermen's Rights Association
Mr. Ron Wolkins - President
Mr. Tony Cunningham - Vice-President
Mr. Fred Sears - Member
Mr. Don Grady - Legal Advisor

Background

The Southwest Fishermen's Rights Association related to the Standing Committee emphasis on fishing communities and the economic development within these communities. They voice that the fishery, by being privatized, will economically be a disaster to any institution in the future. The plan of the Association is to articulate the rights of fishermen under the Canadian Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to have access to the fishery and to have exercised through the government, on their behalf, their fair share of that resource.

The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans is allocating millions of dollars worth of quota on paper, but driving the fishermen from the industry. As quoted, "our fishery is becoming privatized to the point that it belongs to just a few individuals".

Prior to 1970, the coastal communities had control of catching as much as 80 per cent of the groundfish landed off Southwestern Nova Scotia or in the Maritimes. However by the mid-1980's, the federal government had given the offshore such quotas at that time that they would not have reached regardless. With the quota systems today there has been a downfall in the fishery. The inshore fishery has nothing left, but the big companies still have fish quotas. As quoted, " if nothing is done soon there will be a very big crisis in the fisheries, other than the decline in the fish stocks along the South Shore".

It was said that the industry is a billion-dollar industry, however the SWFRA state it is not for the communities. "The communities are going downhill".

For a long period of time the best efforts of hook-and-line hand fishermen have been unable to put a dent in the fisheries' resource. Since 1979 - particularly in the period from 1981 to 1995 - through collaboration of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, to the destruction of the fisheries resource and the best efforts of the

Government of Canada through the political representative of the people of Canada who have permitted DFO to develop a monstrous bureaucratic machine. Through those joint efforts inexhaustible resources have come perilously close to annihilation.

From 1986 to 1993 the average catch of the overall landed by longliners (less than 45 feet fixed gear) was 60 per cent; 20 per cent was landed by handliners ; and 20 per cent was landed by gillnetters. However, in 1998 longliners basically maintained the same percentage, but gillnetters were more than 30 per cent up from 20 per cent; and the handliners were less than 10 per cent down from 20 per cent previously.

Matters of Discussion

There were a number of matters discussed throughout the meeting. Outlined below are the topics that were dealt with during the meeting:

- The ITQ system and its effect on the fishery.
- Moratorium on Fishery vs. Oil Companies and the damage these companies could inflict.
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans rules and regulations.
- Economic Development and future of local communities and economies.

Documentation Requested

There was no documentation requested during this meeting.

Recommendations

The Standing Committee did not present any recommendations at this point, however they did pass a motion which stated:

> "The Standing Committee on Economic Development to bring in Department of Fisheries and Oceans representatives, and industry sector representative to discuss the issues of quotas, ITQ's and regulations as presented by the Southwest Fishermen's Rights Association."

A copy of the transcript of this meeting is available from the Legislative Committees Office. The transcript of this meeting can also be found online at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legi/hansard/comm/ed/ed010116.htm

Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Witnesses

Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Mr. Jon Hansen - Senior Advisor Resource Management, Scotia - Fundy Sector
Mr. Leslie Burke - Director of Policy and Economics

Background

The Scotia-Fundy region encompasses the area from Cape North in Cape Breton along the Atlantic Coast into the Bay of Fundy and to the border between New Brunswick and the United States. Everything east of Halifax, specifically for cod or haddock, is under moratorium since 1993.

In response to the South West Fishermens Rights Association DFO states that there is a lot more to the fishery than just groundfish. There have also been a few changes in the industry. Landed value or difference from 1990 to 2000 accounted for 38 per cent of the total landed value whereas today it is closer to only 13 per cent. The total landed value of all species from 1990 to the present, had gone from $438 million to $618 million. The shellfish value has increased significantly while groundfish has decreased. It (shellfish) has gone from 50 per cent to 83 per cent.

DFO has increased the landed value by other species such as snow crab and shrimp. Some of these species have gone from 1 per cent to 10 per cent and the overall value again, has more than doubled from $232 million in 1990 to $503 million.

Groundfish Management

Groundfish management involves two main things. One is its limited entry licenses. There are only so many licenses and the majority of groundfish licenses is the same today as it was in 1979. Second deals with total allowable catch (TAC) which basically states a limit on how much groundfish can be removed. TAC is divided into quotas and those quota shares are divided among the fleets. Currently those quotas assigned to the different fleets were based largely on the percentage of the quota that was taken in the early 1980's.

Limited entry mostly came about in 1973 as the 200-mile jurisdiction was extended in 1977. As early as 1984 DFO has identified overcapacity in both the inshore and offshore fleets, basically 20 per cent of the boats caught 80 per cent of the quota. The first year DFO put enterprise allocation on the offshore was in 1984. That stopped the

competition within the offshore, but more importantly it also capped what the offshore could do and it gave them a system where the offshore could also try and match their harvesting capacity with the available quotas instead of one free-for-all. This followed in 1988 with the implementing enterprise allocation for the 65 feet to 100 foot fleet.

In 1989 there were quota transfers from the offshore and this was again in percentage shares. At that time 12,000 tons of offshore quota was transferred to the inshore both to the fixed gear and the mobile fleet.

A lot of the quotas have more or less remained the same and have been in terms of percentages that were assigned throughout Atlantic Canada since the early 1980's. There have been some changes where the percentages have decreased from the offshore and given to the inshore but while the percentages are roughly the same, a percentage of something that is decreasing in total has led to a significant drop in just the landings and the available fish that any of the fleets can go for.

The value of the groundfish has gone from $300 million, landed value in 1987, whereas today is it $50 million.

In 1991 DFO introduced ITQs for the small mobile fleet. They did away with an overrun limit for fixed gear, less than 45 feet, whose quota was 3,300 pounds per species. They (mobile fleet) could continue fishing up until 1993, but they were limited in the amount of fish they could catch.

In 1995, there was, through the fixed gear committee quotas divided into three ways. A handline quota, a longline quota and a gill-net quota. All the fishers had to choose which one they wanted to pursue. However, a group of fishermen in Sambro had told the "fixed gear committee" they would like to have a quota for their community that they could manage themselves and implement, ergo Community Management.

Relatively, the results of the Sambro management style was much better and the other communities decided to go to DFO and request a community-based management system for all fixed gear. In 1996 the quotas were divided up among various groups for a trial period and there was unanimous agreement to come up with seven geographically-based community management boards. Those being Eastern Nova, Halifax West, Queens/Lunenburg, Shelburne, Yarmouth, Digby and New Brunswick.

Shelburne being the most active fixed gear county in all the regions ended up with 59 per cent of the quota on cod while the other six communities had a total of 41 per cent.

In 1998 the fixed gear committee designed operational guidelines that were sent to the Federal Minister for approval for over a five-year period and all the representatives with the exception of Shelburne Management Board A supported that. The department divided the fixed gear less than 45 foot quota into percentage shares to the seven different communities and eight different management boards. Then each management board decided what to do with their quota. Presently anyone in a county has a choice, they can choose to either fish with a community board plan or as a single group administered by DFO.

Matters of Discussion

There were a number of matters discussed throughout the meeting. Outlined below are the topics that were dealt with during the meeting:

- DFO's relationship with local fishing groups and the development of self-management positions with respect to the fishery
- Initiation of increased licence fees, dockside monitoring fees, and other fees.
- Privatization of the industry; ITQ's, and limited entry licences.
- Communities and community interests; managing fisheries to enable long-term sustainable levels of employment to communities.
- DFO's relationship with draggers and large corporations.
- DFO buy-back programs for groundfish licences in conjunction with an industry advisory board
- Environmental conditions and the effect on the groundfishery.

Documentation Requested

The following documents were provided to the Standing Committee:

To provide the committee with fees for licences and registration cards; and a list of the fishery representatives.

A copy of the transcript of this meeting is available from the Legislative Committees Office. The transcript of this meeting can also be found online at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legi/hansard/comm/ed/ed010227.htm

Britech Information Systems

Witnesses

Britech Information Systems
Mr. Brian Reid - President and CEO

Background

Incorporated in 1993 Britech Information Systems is a 100 per cent privately owned Canadian company. They use fourth generation languages and rapid application development (4GL RAD). What this means is that they use the leading-edge tools available in the IT industry to produce the software systems that they develop for health care.

Partnerships / Marketing

Britech staff is made up of IT specialists, particularly from health care. Its market includes Nova Scotia community health centres, community hospitals, regional health boards and facilities and physicians' offices. They are also working in markets in central and western Canada. In the U.S. they are targeting New England and Kansas and in Europe they are looking at Scotland, South West England and Northern Ireland. Recently through the Industry Canada initiative a company from Spain by the name of Soluziona are interested in supplying health care information systems to Spanish-speaking countries around the world and they would like to partner with Britech in providing these IT solution in South and Latin America.

In June 2000 Britech entered into a relationship with Partner Canada International, now operating out of Berne, Switzerland and more recently they were looking at partnering with one of the world's largest software companies knows as SAP.

Economy

In January 1997 through to the summer of 2000 Britech generated $2.5 million worth of sales without actually doing any marketing. Their current growth rate runs about 75 to 100 per cent. To date (October 2000) Britech had 26 people employed with them. Twelve were core people and the remainder were part-time and 12 - 15 contract persons all of who are educated in Nova Scotia. The average age is between 25 and 40. The salary range for junior analysts is $30,000 to $100,000 for senior analysts and senior managers. Globally the payroll is about $0.75 million.

In 1996, Britech had done about $40,000 worth of business; in 1997 about $300,000, in 1998 $380,000 in 1999 $600,000 and in the past year (1999-2000) $1.2 million and that has been in Nova Scotia alone.

Products and Services

Britech offers services in IT planning and development and they do the installation, the maintenance and support and the project management as well. Their clinical applications are in real-time integration. For example: lab tests, the reports and results are delivered directly to the workstation in the nurses' office. Britech maintains a central patient index population in excess of 300,000 and are also involved in a project in western Nova Scotia to bring all 10 facilities' central patient indexes together in one global patient index so that they can track the activity of patients through the entire region. External access technology allows Britech to read and write to hospital file systems and theirs at the same time.

Opportunities and Challenges

Nova Scotia incentives include quality of life, trained workforce (there are a lot of very talented people looking for a way to stay in Nova Scotia). R and D tax credits, very effective for small start-up companies. Nova Scotia's proximity to Europe (the time zone allows us to be flexible in which part of the market we are dealing with). With assistance from the Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development and Industry Canada we will be able to get in and penetrate those markets as well.

Potential limiters, Nova Scotia is not a great promoter of its own talents and skills, there are need for provincial and federal governments to promote Nova Scotia. Private Insurance vs. Workers' Compensation Board, IT businesses are typically grouped into the professional businesses who purchase private insurance. WCB has a significant unfunded liability, forced participation into the WCB program might be a significant exodus to markets or provinces. Personal tax levels, Nova Scotia needs to offer tax incentives to attract businesses. The need for corporate tax levels, 50 per cent is a lot to take on a small company operation. Subsidies to foreign corporations, Nova Scotia needs to offer a level playing field to all businesses. Nova Scotia taxes are being used to subsidize the competition. There has to be other ways to get those investments. Health and education, maintaining these services is part of what employees or potential employees are going to be looking for.

Matters of Discussion

There were a number of matters discussed throughout the meeting. Outlined below are the topics that were dealt with during the meeting:

- State of readiness of hospitals, levels of automation and WAN infrastructure.
- Innovations and new technology.
- Compatibility of equipment; integration into existing systems.
- Projected growth of the company.
- Systems security.

Documentation Requested

There was not documentation requested during this meeting.

Witness Suggestions

When asked by the Standing Committee how can the provincial government help companies such as Britech, it was suggested by the witnesses that government could:

Provide way of promoting Nova Scotia Solutions, approaching companies such as Britech, engaging them to aid in seeking better ways to solve problems within the industry. As well to set a standard for the integration of these products, let the industry respond, setting the standard of communications, what they want delivered.

A copy of the transcript of this meeting is available from the Legislative Committees Office. The transcript of this meeting can also be found online at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legi/hansard/comm/ed/ed001031.htm

Information Technology Industry Alliance of Nova Scotia (ITANS)

Witnesses

ITANS
Mr. Mario DeMello - Chairman
Mr. Brian Pleet - 1st Vice President
Mr. Paul Campbell - 2nd Vice President
Mr. Ian Blanchard - Past Chairman

Background

ITANS is the Information Technology Industry Association of Nova Scotia. Their mission is to promote the growth and development of the industry through the sharing of experiences, internal and external collaborations and by disseminating information and opportunities to their members.

Incorporated in 1989 as the Software Industry Association of Nova Scotia, the name was changed in 1997 to Information Technology Industry Alliance of Nova Scotia. The organization is run by a Board of Directors, which is elected by the membership. Within the Board of director there is the election of an executive. The executive consists of the Chairman, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and Past President. There is only one full-time employee, the office administrator. That salary is funded by monies provided by the Economic Diversification Agreement.

The service provided by ITANS consists of everything from breakfast and dinner events to educate members and to fundraise, to networking opportunities. The Association produces a weekly digest of information which would contain anything from business opportunities to articles of interest to profiling members who are in the news. They also maintain a web site that lists the members' directory and provides members and the general public with services. Plans are under way to change the website into a central depository of information so that it is and will be available to all who are interested in what is happening in IT in Nova Scotia.

ITANS encourage companies to join the Association. It is not mandatory but if companies want the industry to grow in Nova Scotia, they have to contribute to the growth of the Association.

In terms of affiliations, and strategic alliances, ITANS is part of a group of affiliated organizations across the country. They are affiliated with ITAC (Information Technology Association of Canada), who provide the same services as ITANS but on a national level. The major difference between the ITAC and ITANS is the membership fee. ITAC ranges from about $10,000 to $60,000 per year per company; ITANS fees range from $150 to $900. The Board of Directors are presidents and CEOs of companies.

This is still a new industry, one of the fastest growing industries in Nova Scotia. Most of the members of this industry are small to medium-sized businesses.

Role and Objectives

The objectives of the Association are to represent industry, individuals and companies who provide a wide variety of services from software design to consulting, system integration, telecommunications, multimedia, and networks. Education is also a very important part of this industry. Organizations such as ITI, Dal Tech, and the community colleges all play an important role in the industry.

One of the other roles that ITANS play is advocating with government, other IT associations and among their membership. Their vision is to be universally recognized as the major contributor to the growth and development of the Nova Scotia IT industry.

Concerns and Challenges

ITANS major concern presently is to keep their full time office administrator. They must raise about $55,000 in order to do so. They cannot grow this industry on a volunteer basis, they have to do it by having full time staff running the Association. Another concern is how to identify all the IT companies in Nova Scotia. Through advocacy issues, and surveys done at that time with Industry Canada, ITANS did a quick survey of the industry and created a CD of IT companies for SoftWorld which was a large IT event held in Halifax October 2000, but more needs to be done.

Matters of Discussion

There were a number of matters discussed throughout the meeting. Outlined below are he topics that were dealt with during the meeting:

- Government funding and the relationship between ITANS and both the federal and provincial governments.
- The need to have an umbrella group to focus on different aspects of the new emerging industry.
- ACOA loans and grants, and the role of government in businesses, i.e., Government assistance.
- Legislation that is favorable to technology companies and a strong educational community.

Documentation Requested

There was no documentation requested during this meeting.

A copy of the transcript of this meeting is available from the Legislative Committees Office. The transcript of this meeting can also be found online at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legi/hansard/comm/ed/ed001121.htm

Communities in Bloom

Witnesses

Communities in Bloom
Mr. Raymond Carriere - National Chairperson
Mr. Ivan Stinson - Provincial Judge
Mrs. Margaret Stinson - National Committee Member

Background

Communities in Bloom is a non-profit organization. It was started in 1995 and is similar to the programs in Europe that have been ongoing for more than 40 years, and in cases are run, financed, managed, and promoted by the tourism departments. It is an organization that, by means of competition, encourages communities to tidy up, be more visibly appealing, environmentally aware and encourage heritage in order to make communities better places to live in, work in, and to visit.

Communities in Bloom, as a national organization, operate on a budget of funds and services with a cash value (for the year 2000) of approximately $400,000. The organization receives some money from the federal government, and from the Canadian Heritage Department. It also receives corporate sponsorship funds from the National Capital Commission, the Nutrite Fertilizer Company and sponsorships in-kind.

Municipalities that can benefit from this program also contribute to it. They have to pay a registration fee, based on the population which will vary from $200 to $900.

About the Program

What the program does is encourages communities to participate; to have their community compared to other communities either provincially or nationally resulting in civic pride. It also enables the smaller communities to develop some initiatives that may be beneficial to larger cities.

When communities register, they will be provided with information on how to get their community involved, how to do planting projects, where they can obtain information on heritage conservation, and composting. Communities in Bloom have strategic alliances with other existing organizations, i.e., Pith in Canada, which does a tidiness program and Canadian Composting Council, because of the rules and regulations surrounding composting in municipalities. They are also developing further strategic alliances with other national and provincial organizations so that they can distribute that information to

communities on how to participate.

Once the municipalities are registered, they will be informed of a date where the judges(who are trained, professional volunteers) will go and visit them. The judging process is a twofold process. The communities will receive a report card on their achievements for evaluation criteria of tidiness, landscaping, turf, environmental efforts, heritage, floral, community involvement and urban forestry, but they will also receive a consultants report on the community.

Judging

When the judges do come and evaluate, they are asked to visit the whole community. Judging is done in the fall and there are provincial and national award ceremonies. These ceremonies also promote excellent ventures for promotion and exchange of information. The communities are judged on seven different criteria: tidiness and effort; environmental effort; community involvement; heritage preservation; urban forestry; landscaped areas; floral arrangements; and turf and sod areas.

Benefits and Opportunities

There are opportunities for communities to compete on an international level and to give visibility or promotional opportunities on an international level. Communities in Bloom is in the process of becoming an excellent business opportunity for any community that has participated. The program has recently been awarded under the Product Club Program of the Canadian Tourism Commission. The Canadian Tourism Commission will invest in developing and promoting what will be called Bloom and Garden Tours throughout Canada. These tours will be in the most various manners of the tourism industry. What they want Communities in Bloom to do, in partnership with organizations throughout the country, is to focus on this opportunity of open spaces, gardening and horticulture and also to complement existing tourism attractions to make tourism more sustainable.

Also very important is that horticulture and tourism are labour intensive businesses or industries. Percentages of amounts invested or spent in these fields goes back to hiring people.

Matters of Discussion

There were a number of matters discussed throughout the meeting. Outlined below are the topics that were dealt with during the meeting:

- Urban forestry; taking inventory of what trees are there and properly managing them in accordance with policies and regulations in the municipalities.
- Operating Budget, and forms of funding.
- Criteria of Judges/judging.

Documentation Required

It was requested by the Standing Committee that the presenters provide the Standing Committee with a list of persons responsible for the provincial editions of Communities in Bloom in New Brunswick and Newfoundland.

Witness Suggestions

The witnesses provided the following suggestion for consideration:

To the benefit of Nova Scotia, that the Tourism Department of the Government and the tourism industry become more involved in encouraging communities to participate in the program.

A copy of the transcript of this meeting is available from the Legislative Committees Office. The transcript of this meeting can also be found online at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legi/hansard/comm/ed/ed001017.htm

B. C. A. Holdings Ltd.

Witnesses

B. C. A. Holdings Ltd.
Dr. Greg Macleod - President (B.A. Investment Cooperative Ltd.)

Department of Economic Development
Mr. Chris Payne - Manager, Community Investment Funds

Background

There is a pattern in Canada, and in many places, in which a few centers will develop main metropolitan centers. Outside of these centers there is a terrific brain drain and capital drain. It is a vicious circle. Unemployment rates in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto and right across to Vancouver are about 6 - 7 per cent. However Northern Ontario, Gaspe, Northern New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Yarmouth, Cape Breton is about 20 per cent. There is an unfair imbalance within Nova Scotia; a strong center while the outlying parts are weakening.

In Halifax the unemployment rate is less than 7 per cent while other parts of the province are close to 20 per cent. With regard to this uneven, unfair distribution of growth and development, it weakens the province as a total place. Following this statement it was said that "there should be a general review of all government-controlled economic resources with a view to correcting this imbalance. All existing programs should be analyzed regarding how much is spent in different parts of the province".

Challenges and Opportunities

Nova Scotia should be viewed as composed of three socio-economic zones: Metro Halifax; Mainland Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island. Many of the programs that suit Metro Halifax, do not suit the rest of Nova Scotia. There should be set programs for the metro region and other kinds of programs for non-metro regions.

Another problem is capital. You cannot get investment in the smaller areas. The province should orient any kind of help for investment in smaller areas such as investment programs, tax credit programs for the non-metro areas. There needs to be a catch-up strategy with the government tax equity program for community investment groups. It should be enhanced and focused on non-metro areas.

The tax credit should be raised to 40 per cent in the non-metro areas of Nova Scotia. Newfoundland has a similar program at 35 per cent. Their labour-sponsored funds are both federal and provincial. Nova Scotia does not have any federal funding. There should be a way of getting federal participation so that Nova Scotia could get both a federal program and a provincial program matching the same way as in the labour-based funds. Two billion dollars leave Nova Scotia every year in investments, very little comes back in investments. Investment firms should be encouraged to facilitate their clients' investment in Nova Scotia.

There should be tax-free business zones as in P.E.I. and Newfoundland. It is mainly payroll tax credits offered to any company coming to an area of high unemployment.

The government of Nova Scotia should set up a low interest mortgage fund for mining towns. These mining towns downtown core that are not attractive to potential businesses and that does not help in getting business going.

There should be special tax incentives for businesses to attract technical people to the outlying areas so that they could compete in the new economy. Programs such as tourism, culture and museums, could easily be divided among the three provincial zones.

Studies show that economic development is related to educational levels. The educational level of the Halifax area is much higher than the educational levels in the outlying regions. There should be a special catch-up program to raise the levels of education in all these areas.

Matters of Discussion

There were a number of matters discussed throughout the meeting. Outlined below are the topics that were dealt with during the meeting:

- The volunteer movement and how it works best in non-metro areas. It is a lot easier to get a volunteer group together to work for nothing on projects in non-metro areas than in metro areas.
- Technocratic systems determined by experts on how to measure growth and development and what should be done.
- CD Investment Funds, Equity Tax Credits and the raising of capital.
- Areas of the Cape Breton economy that shows potential for growth, i.e., Tourism & Culture.

- Federal Government to participate in the tax credit program, to recognize the community investment funds under the same legislation as the labour-sponsored funds, whereby the tax credit costs would be split with the federal government.

- Reliance on government, government would subsidize a service industry in Halifax but not in Cape Breton. Government has a little bit of responsibility in undoing these structural problems.

Documentation Requested

There was no documentation requested.

Recommendation

The following motion was made by the Standing Committee:

That the Standing Committee on Economic Development write to the Minister of Finance and request that "The Department of Finance approach the Federal Government and encourage the enhancement of the present Equity Tax Credit program in regard to the investments funds; and to encourage chartered banks to participate more fully in the CEDIF program".

Witness Suggestions

The following suggestions were brought forward by the presenter:

When government rents property they should give preference to community-owned businesses.

The investment equity program is fundamental and essential and it should be strengthened.

While Halifax has a dynamic growing economy, other regions of the province are well behind, there should be a general review of all government-controlled economic resources with a view to correcting this imbalance.

Most government programs are made to suit Metro Halifax but often do not work well for the other two regions, therefore there should be a set of programs for the Metro Region and another different set for the rest of the Province.

Enhance the community equity tax credit program.

Establish tax free business zones.

Offer a payroll tax credit to any company coming to an area of high unemployment.

Establish a low interest mortgage fund for main street building in mining towns.

Government agencies should be review to see if they could be oriented to areas that need their help.

The province could offer a tax incentive program to attract high tech professionals to areas of high unemployment.

Programs such as Tourism, Culture and Museums could be divided into the three provincial zones.

The province could work with the federal government to sponsor a ten year intensive education program in areas of high unemployment.

A copy of the transcript of this meeting is available from the Legislative Committees Office. The transcript of this meeting can also be found online at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legi/hansard/comm/ed/ed010213.htm

Cape Breton Regional Municipality

Witnesses

Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Mr. John Whalley - Economic Development Officer

Background

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality's economic development strategy is based upon a view of what they would call the critical systems that comprise an economy. Their view is essentially that there are probably eight or nine critical systems which provide the foundation for a modern economy in society. These range from human resource development, which includes education and labour mobility; access to capital; access to energy; access to efficient transportation systems; access to efficient communications systems; health communities and community development; a healthy environment and governance being the controlling or key system.

Much of the work that CBRM have been undertaking during the past few years has been trying to sort out the economic circumstances of the municipality. These circumstances being an ageing population, high rates of dependency on government transfers and declining infrastructure. Trying to sort through these systems and determine what is required first to achieve some level of stabilization in regional economy; and to provide a platform for future growth.

There have been many efforts to try to attract new activity to Cape Breton, but the situation, looking at the unemployment data, the population data and the demographic data, remains very serious. It is a very important issue for the Province of Nova Scotia being that the Cape Breton Regional Municipality is really the second most heavily populated municipality in the province. The decline of the municipality, the difficult circumstances of much of rural Nova Scotia are an Important issue for the province.

Matters of Discussion

There were a number of matters discussed throughout the meeting. Outlined below are the topics that were dealt with during the meeting:

- Submission of a bid or proposal for some of the assets of Sydney Steel.
- CBRM recently acquired the Sydney Marine Terminal (Government Wharf) from Transport Canada.

- Industries or businesses that may wish to locate in Industrial Cape Breton may not have the availability of Natural Gas which will be another hurdle for the Municipality.

- No representation on the Energy Council from Industrial Cape Breton.

- Sysco and the environmental clean-up. This is an issue that is hurting the community.

- Different forms of social dependency. Factual though not a misconception. The ratio of transfers to employment income often exceed 60 per cent, the provincial average is about 10 per cent and the national average is about 10 per cent. To provide a level of municipal service, CBRM needs those transfers.

- The provincial-municipal equalization formula and realignment of services between the province and the municipalities. Based upon standard expenditures a recommendation would be to move to a system which is essentially more like the federal system, where there is an unconditional transfer and it is based not upon expenditures but upon revenue-generating ability.

- Transportation as an important link to economic prosperity in Cape Breton. Presently the railway in Cape Breton is in jeopardy; air travel is prohibitively expensive, roads are in serious condition and there is no national highway system. There is a limited access 100-Series Highway that goes from Port Hawkesbury to Sydney; however the provincial government should regulate what should be on the road and what should be on rail. Right now there is no policy to regulate this.

Documentation Requested

The following documentation was requested by the Standing Committee:

A copy of the CBRM Port Study;
A copy of the historic financial performance of the Sydney Marine Terminal under the ownership of Transport Canada;
CBRM's financial projections based upon reasonable estimates of revenues and expenditures;
A copy of CBRM's proposal regarding the assets of the Sydney Steel Corporation;
A copy of a study addressing the issue of the impact of te service exchange agreements in Nova Scotia;
An estimate of the unconditional transfers received by the municipal units within the boundaries of the County of Cape Breton prior to amalgamation and;
A table which illustrates the deficits of individual municipal units prior to amalgamation, as well as the level of debt associated with the individual municipal units.

A copy of the transcript of this meeting is available from the Legislative Committees Office. The transcript of this meeting can also be found online at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legi/hansard/comm/ed/ed010320.htm

STATEMENT OF SUBMISSION

All of which is respectfully submitted to the House of Assembly
this 21 day of November, 2001

Mr. Brooke Taylor, MLA (Chairman)
(Colchester - Musquodoboit Valley)

I concur

Mr. William Dooks, MLA
(Eastern Shore)

I concur

Mr. Don Downe, MLA
(Lunenburg West)

I concur

Mr. Richard Hurlburt, MLA
(Yarmouth)

I concur

Mr. Brian Boudreau, MLA
(Cape Breton the Lakes)

I concur

Mr. Frank Chipman, MLA
(Annapolis)

I concur

Mr. Frank Corbett, MLA
(Cape Breton Centre)

I concur

Mr. Jon Carey, MLA
(Kings West)

I concur

Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA
(Halifax Chebucto)

Committee Membership

During the 2nd Session of the 58th General Assembly of the House of Assembly, the make-up of the Standing Committee on Economic Development consisted of the following members:

Mr. Brooke Taylor, MLA (Chairman)
(Colchester - Musquodoboit Valley)

Mr. William Dooks, MLA
(Eastern Shore)

Mr. Richard Hurlburt, MLA
(Yarmouth)

Mr. Frank Chipman, MLA
(Annapolis)

Mr. Kerry Morash, MLA
(Queens)

Mr. Kenneth MacAskill, MLA
(Victoria)

Mr. Don Downe, MLA
(Lunenburg West)

Mr. Frank Corbett, MLA
(Cape Breton Centre)

Mr. William Estabrooks, MLA
(Timberlea - Prospect)

The following changes to the Committee membership were as follows: Mr. Jon Carey, MLA (Kings West), replaced Mr. Kerry Morash, MLA (Queens); Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA (Halifax Chebucto), replaced Mr. Bill Estabrooks, MLA (Timberlea Prospect).

Committee Meetings

The Standing Committee has been meeting publicly on Tuesdays since its establishment. During the 2nd Session of the 58th General Assembly the Standing Committee on Resources has met on the following dates.

September 26, 2000
October 17, 2000
October 31, 2000
November 21, 2000
December 5, 2000
January 16, 2001
January 30, 2001
February 13, 2001
February 27, 2001
March 20, 2001
April 17, 2001
May 1, 2001
May 29, 2001

Notices

Notices of committee meetings are sent to all members of the committee, support staff of the caucus and legislative offices, the House of Assembly Press Gallery, the government wire services and is published on the internet.

Transcripts

Transcripts of the Committee meetings are available from the Legislative Committees Office, 3rd Floor, Dennis Building, 1740 Granville Street, P.O. Box 2630 Station M, Halifax, NS B3J 3N5 or from the provincial government web-site:
www.gov.ns.ca/legi/hansard/comm

Annual/Interim Reports

All reports of the Standing Committee on Economic Development are compiled by the Legislative Committees Office and forwarded to the committee members for consideration. Once the report is finalized, it is then distributed as follows:

The Speaker/Clerk of the House of Assembly; all members of the Legislative Assembly; all presenters who made presentations before the committee; all Legislative Assemblies and Legislative Libraries across Canada, including the Territories and the media. The report is also available to all persons interested in obtaining a copy from the Legislative Committees Office or through the provincial government web-site.

Acknowledgments

The Standing Committee on Resources wishes to extend its gratitude to the following for their time and cooperation:

Georgia-Pacific Canada, Inc.; Communities in Bloom; Britech Information Systems Ltd.; Information Technology Industry Alliance of Nova Scotia; Mac Tara Limited; Southwest Fishermen's Rights Association; LaFarge Canada Inc.; B. C. A. Holdings; Department of Fisheries and Oceans; Cape Breton Regional Municipality; Atlantic Provinces Ready-Mixed Concrete Association; and the Maritime Lumber Bureau. Many thanks and gratitude to Mr. Robert Kinsman, Manager of Hansard; Hansard Staff; to Mr. Don Ledger, Co-ordinator of Legislative Television and Broadcasting; Legislative Television Staff; to Mr. Michael Laffin, Co-ordinator, House of Assembly Operations; House of Assembly Staff; and to Margaret Murphy, Legislative Librarian and Librarian Staff.